

THE ACADEMY

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FICTION SUPPLEMENT

FALLACIES ABOUT FICTION

WHO would ever have supposed that Fiction was the Cinderella of literature? Hitherto it has been regarded as the tyrant, the usurper who would never entertain the claims of Poetry or Essay. Public and publisher had entered into conspiracy, we were told, to "keep up a fiction, so to speak." But now Fiction has received an official snub from the Trustees of the British Museum—a public and permanent snub—delivered from the roof of the renovated Reading Room. Among the nineteen mortals commemorated, one novelist only is deemed worthy of architectural honours—the order of the frieze. But Scott apparently has only been included because he has *other* claims in the hierarchy of British letters, if we are to believe an interview with one of the officials, published in last Sunday's *Observer*. This seems rather like erecting a statue to Cecil Rhodes on the Stock Exchange, and explaining that the honour had nothing to do with South Africa, because the hero's other services were of a higher description than those rendered to English power in the darker continent. And it is almost a coincidence that, while we are all discussing the literary bias of the Museum Trustees, the Sultan of Turkey should have received Sir Arthur Conan Doyle—a graceful incident, proving, according to the papers, "the interest in *contemporary English literature* manifested by the sick man of Europe." How strange if the Sultan inscribes on the mosque of St. Sophia the name of Conan Doyle! With the Sublime Porte all things are possible. We may look forward to a reaction in the Press in favour of Abdul; and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle may have done much to remove the unpleasant impression produced throughout Turkey by the poems of Mr. William Watson.

But if Sir Arthur is fighting the battle of fiction in the East, at home there are enemies besides the Trustees of the British Museum. Our esteemed contemporary, the *Bookman*, borrowing the quills of the late Robert Buchanan, has launched into the empyrean of Fleet Street an airship entitled the "Fleshy School of Fiction." With some humour it has enquired of the schoolmaster what he thinks of this aerial torpedo. In the most disingenuous way Mr. Robert Hichens writes:

Among the authors whose works I know I can only think of two, both of them women, who seem to me deliberately to appeal to the base instincts of readers, and one of these two writes so weakly and badly that I can hardly think she can do much harm.

Mr. Hichens is too modest. Are there no other exceptions, as Gibbon asked on a famous occasion, among men? There is no woman novelist who has surpassed Mr. Hichens in his particular line. "Qui accuse s'accuse." And what shall be said of Mr. Watts Dunton, who, "debarred from reading novels good or bad," brings indirect charges of cynicism and decadence against our contemporary novels. We can only recommend him to read them. Contempt prior to examination, we know from the immortal Paley, is an intellectual vice from which some of the greatest minds are not free. It is sad to find the friend and advocate of a school once dubbed fleshy and decadent throwing brickbats at a newer generation. It is, however, quite obvious for whom the strictures of Mr. Watts Dunton

are intended. He is thinking of an art other than fiction; and we venture to think the observations unworthy of him.

Only a short while ago an American publisher anticipated Mr. Watts Dunton and the British Museum Trustees in their dyspeptic estimate of Boccaccio's English descendants. But at an even earlier date that excellent Bishop Heliodorus of Tricca was invited to repudiate his first novel. He is really the proto-martyr of fiction, for legend says he resigned his see rather than consign his manuscript to the flames. He should become the patron saint of the Stage and Authors Societies, for did he not resist a primeval censorship, if there ever was a Mr. Redford who could know anything about Greek. Time has justified him, and Purgatory must have a gentle flame for the author of "Theagenes and Chariclea." A journalist might point out easily enough that European fiction has declined since the days of Petronius, Apuleius, Longus, and Achilles Tatius. But an age that can boast of a Robert Hichens and a Conan Doyle need never despair. Surely a renaissance is lurking somewhere. Perhaps it may come, as before, from Constantinople, in the train of the author of "Sherlock Holmes." Glancing briefly at the intermediate period which lies, roughly, between Petronius and Mr. Robert Hichens, we believe that, if poetry is the supreme glory of our language, as prose is the supreme glory of the French, English fiction is one of the most distinguishing plants in the garden of English literature. If it is a more recent growth (as we are informed by an official of the British Museum in the *Observer*) it has given more brilliant blossoms than, say, the shrub of English Philosophy. Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, George Meredith, Thomas Hardy, and Henry James are relatively more important to their own art than Bacon or Locke in the science of philosophy. They stand for more in the history of humanism. In France we may find their peers, Balzac, Hugo, Flaubert, Zola, and Anatole France, but not their superiors. Bacon and Locke are dwarfed by Greek and German rivals. Fortunately the Trustees of the British Museum are the efficient guardians of books—not of literature, with which they have less connection than publishers. No one asks their opinion except the *Observer*; and we are not very much surprised. The publisher, on the other hand, is a very important factor in contemporary literature.

But who will seriously maintain that the art of the novelist and story-teller has decayed? We need not be Imperialists, nor even admirers of Mr. Kipling's "jingo-lingo," but we must acclaim his extraordinary power to stir the imaginations of men, his original and matchless art. We need not be Socialists, but we cannot withhold homage from the marvellous inventions, the brilliant fantasies, half fiction, half philosophy, of Mr. H. G. Wells. We may yawn sometimes at Mrs. Humphry Ward's "intellectuals," but we cannot deny her fine gift of portraiture, the dignity of her aim and the interest of her achievement. Who shall deny the title of artist to the author of the "Little Novels of Italy" and "The Fool Errant"? and where we find the artist in fiction we are in the presence of literature—but not in the British Museum or newspaper sense of the word. In Mr. Joseph Conrad and Mr. Maarten

Maartens we may claim adopted children, captains of a foreign legion, of which Mr. Henry James is the honorary "kernel." Shall we be accused of too wide appreciation if we mention other names, such as Mr. H. B. Marriott Watson, Mr. Egerton Castle, Miss Mary Cholmondeley, Mr. Archibald Marshall, Mr. Filson Young, Mr. Reginald Turner and Mr. Somerset Maugham? But as Mr. Gosse said on a certain occasion, "Away with these gods who sit beside their nectar"; what is the use of talking about them if we have not read them? Mr. Watts Dunton must either immediately purchase their works, or we must make him a life member of the *Times* Book Club. Then there are two novelists of whose work we have heard little in recent years—Mr. J. M. Falconer, the author of the "Lost Stradivarius," and Mr. A. W. Clarke, the author of "Jasper Tristram." Neither of the books met with the success which they deserved. They were well reviewed, and perhaps read by a few. The former went into a second edition. But they were overlooked by the public. Neither of the novels could be called *mere* fiction. They breathed the spirit of literature no less than the genius of the novelist. Mr. Falconer has, of course, met with other successes. Yet of "Jasper Tristram" and its author we never hear anything; though it is a real masterpiece—or, to be quite accurate, three-fourths of a masterpiece. That is too often the case with all our older English novels. Is it possible to point to any story of Dickens (perhaps the greatest of all our novelists) as a *complete* masterpiece? Of Thackeray, we can only mention "Vanity Fair." Pater, of course, thought "Esmond" a finer work, because of the greater dignity of its interest; but "Esmond" is only a half-successful attempt to reconstruct the past. Shorthouse, on the other hand, succeeded in an earlier period with a more ambitious motive. "John Inglesant" is one of the great novels of the language, although the figures have not the vivid life which Thackeray alone could give. But when we are moaning over contemporaries we should remember that some of them may be destined to wear a giant's robe in the eyes of a future generation. Not until the man is dead do we recognise his strength. As the years recede the great name of Robert Louis Stevenson is becoming to some of his contemporaries an exquisite orb in the sunset of English literature and English fiction. To others he may be a sunrise. Each great novelist gives us something which no other great novelist has given us before. You will not find in Scott, Dickens or Thackeray the particularly subtle qualities which you value in Stevenson, Meredith, Hardy or Henry James. Dickens could never draw a lady. Thackeray could never evoke a charming, clever, and perfectly virtuous woman; Lady Dedlock is a transposition creation; Ethel Newcombe and Lady Castlewood are as unreal as George Eliot's men. Neither Dickens nor Thackeray were able to differentiate the sexes with the superb reticence of Emily Brontë in "Wuthering Heights," which, after "Vanity Fair," is perhaps the greatest novel of the language. Prose may become—has become—a Parthenon of words. But fiction in its essence must always be Gothic, romantic in the larger sense of the word; and like a mediæval cathedral is practically never finished. Every generation produces its chapter, its dean, its bishop, and its master mason. It is not necessary for the novel reader to follow Dr. Horton (*c.f. Bookman*) down a shadowy Holywell Street, in order to emerge with the "Green Carnation" in one pocket and "Miss Fanny Hill" in the other, as evidences of the past and present decay of English fiction. There are other and more generous methods of appraising your contemporaries. When you have sobbed over an old book, and lamented the decease of its author in the pages of the *Bookman*, go out and buy a new one.

ROBERT ROSS.

ABOUT NOVELS: A CONFESSION

I HAVE to confess, with regret and much perplexity, that I find it difficult to read the novels of my contemporaries. There are exceptions, of course: I beg those novelists who are my friends and acquaintances to believe it. But in a general way I find it nearly always difficult and sometimes impossible to read contemporary English novels, and since I do not flatter myself that in this matter, more than in any other, I am unique, it may not be unprofitable to seek for an explanation.

It is not that I dislike fiction. I read the novels of past generations, even for the first time, with immense pleasure. The other day somebody told me of a good one by Anthony Trollope which I had not read: I got it, and neglected everything but other pleasures for it until I had finished it. If Mr. Meredith—for though he is happily still with us his novels do not belong to our generation, and it is of that strictly I am writing—if Mr. Meredith were to produce a novel he had not thought worth publishing before, I should shout for joy. If Tolstoy were to write another I should rush for the first translation, assured that, preach as he will, he can never sink the great artist in the propagandist. And so on: I am by no means without my appreciations in fiction.

Nor am I too "superior." I can read all sorts of rubbish—political speeches—letters to the papers—essays exposing Socialism—an article like this—with equanimity. But the thoughtful studies of imaginary characters composed by Messrs. X and Y, my contemporaries, I cannot read.

Nor, I would believe, am I inferior either. It does not become me to boast of the intellectual feats I can achieve, but I may assure my readers that I really do understand Messrs. X. and Y., as far as I can get with them. Only—it is such a little way.

Nor, finally to exhaust the obvious explanations before my readers' patience, am I one immersed in the past, intolerant of the present. Most of us have moods in which some other age or country, the Athens of Pericles, the Rome of Julius Cæsar, the England of Elizabeth, seems more attractive than our own—moods which generally follow some rebuff or disappointment, when we think a nobler time would have treated us better. But although there are characteristics of my own time which are odious to me, I recognise it for one of the most interesting periods there have ever been. One sees the beginnings of changes which are really vital changes. Property, character, the relation of the sexes, there is a change in our thought, even in the common thought of the world, about all these which is a real change in our civilisation, though to be sure the change may be new only to ourselves. Oh yes, it is an interesting age enough. In the world of thought and of private life, at least, one comes across extraordinary things every day. I wish to be of my time, and to understand as much of it as I can. And I read, for example, Mr. Shaw, his plays and prefaces, with far more interest than the works (if he will forgive me) of many greater men who are dead, just because he expresses the peculiar problems implicit in the state of civilisation I see about me.

Perhaps my general failure with our novelists is partly accounted for by my interest in these things and their apparent lack of it. So many of them seem to be living in their grandfathers' time. And beyond this I see a faint light on the subject in their general lack of arresting material. Without any very peculiar opportunities in my little life, I constantly come across people and actions a great deal more curious and suggestive than those I meet in contemporary novels. This is not immodest to say, because I know that were I a novelist I could not use much of this material—it

would be recognised and resented—and such, no doubt, is the case with the actual novelists. Finding their themes, however, a little used and unexciting, one finds it a little tedious to read through all the prolegomena thereof, the necessary descriptions and histories. One almost wonders how the writers even have the patience.

I once (for I have fallen on so egotistical a manner in this article that I may as well be thorough and unashamed)—I once wrote a novel, and though it was shorter than the common, I wonder when I see it that I ever had the patience. It had all the faults, if they are faults, that I have indicated here; and yet I went on with all the descriptions and histories as though the affair had some significance—which it had not. However, that effort exhausted me, and when I contemplate the others who began about the same time and went on and are going on still, with a novel or two every year to their record, even when I remember the greater encouragement they very properly received, I wonder how they can do it. Always excepted those few—my friends—who really have something to say.

But then, says the reader, if you are so easily tired, why are you so fond of old novels? Well, we are not concerned with your authentic creative artists; they are they, in our own generation or another, and I do not say our own is without them. But why Trollope? There were times when Trollope was as finely creative an artist as almost any other, but taking him at his average, I think I must assume that his documentary value pleases me. I did not know his people, and so I like to hear about them. It may sound priggish, but one rather likes to learn things when it is not a trouble. The stamp of accurate realism is on Trollope, and by the way the conversation of his upper classes—with its blunt logic and homely vocabulary—is a hundred times liker the talk of the same classes to-day than the epigrams and generalisations which our novelists credit to them, or—as Mr. Chesterton says somewhere—snobbishly flatter them withal. So Trollope is a “document,” and so is many another. When our men write of things I know nothing of I can read them also in the same spirit. But when they write, as they usually write, about people and things I am more or less acquainted with . . . Oh, well, perhaps there is a less flattering reason for my weariness of them, after all. I will go read another Trollope, or try to write another novel for myself, and give the slighted ones their opportunity.

G. S. STREET.

FOR FAMILY READING

The Pirouette, and other Stories. By HELEN MATHERS. (Digby, Long & Co., 6s.)

We do not know whether any of the twenty-one stories in this volume have appeared in the more popular of the monthly magazines, but it needs no very discriminating eye to perceive that they belong to that class of work, “light and bright and with a strong love interest,” which editors of such periodicals call for in the literary year-books. We can support our statement with figures, for of these stories fourteen end with marriages and three with a new understanding between husband and wife. This is very nice and respectable, and the people who do these things show an equal consideration for the other proprieties; for they all have motors, maids, money, and titled aunts, or else honest poverty, which appears to imply an income of about eight hundred a year.

Much of this sort of thing quickly becomes mawkish, and we begin to pine for the society of prostitutes and saloon-bar loafers. They have, at least, the virtues of their defects, but the men and women of whom the authoress writes have neither virtues nor vices, unless

a habit of talking like a faint, flat echo of “The Dolly Dialogues” falls within the latter category.

The writers of stories of this type, trusting in their “strong love interest” to pull them through, usually have no story to tell at all. When they do venture to handle something approaching an incident, they fling probabilities to the winds in order to obtain a *dénouement* that may affect their readers as much as a chaste kiss to be followed by an early wedding. Thus in the story that provides this volume with its title, a servant girl who is giving evidence in a trial for murder at a London court, is permitted to cross-examine the prisoner after the manner of a “*Juge d'Instruction*.” Having convinced herself of his innocence, she detects the real culprit in the well of the court, has him brought before her, and compels him to confess to the justly-surprised judge and jury! After this it is hardly astonishing to find that the book is carelessly written. Such things as “confidentialy,” *magnum opum*, and Tag’s Island may be the property of the printer, but it surely is not his fault that the author of “Lavengro” is twice referred to as Isaac Borrow. The style in which the stories are written only varies in manner and not in degree of badness, the most ambitious story in the book, “An Excision of Memory,” reminding us oddly of one of those mysterious pieces of prose that used to be set in examination papers for the correction of the grammar and punctuation. We quote almost at random:

They had come together for the usual reasons why matrimony obtains in their order, because a girl wants the freedom and position of a married woman, and the man because he wanted an heir; . . . Lord Sanlue had never been an uxorious husband, only the very young bridegrooms in his set began that way, the older ones knew better—that such heroics would not last, and deliberately went slow from the beginning, lest their wives’ devotion proved a worry when their attentions slackened, and went elsewhere—as was inevitable.

If we have reviewed this book at greater length than it merits, it is because we consider, as we stated at the beginning of this notice, that these stories are typical of the greater number of those that appear in the English magazines. We suppose that the editors of these periodicals are correct in believing that their readers prefer a happy ending, but only the most reckless cynic would augur well for the married life of these dull and unimaginative men and women, and a process of selection which would have omitted nearly all the masterpieces of Poe and Mr. Kipling is hardly to be commended. The short story in skilful hands is a fine literary form, but it will never receive the treatment that it deserves until the present ludicrous restrictions have been removed, and editors and publishers have ceased to be afraid of the naked body that still lingers under the most immaculate frock-coat or the daintiest of frocks. Until that happy awakening the obvious will continue to be crucified at so many guineas a thousand, and we hope we shall not have to read the results.

SUFFRAGETTE NOVELS

The Convert. By ELIZABETH ROBINS. (Methuen, 6s.)

The Election of Isabel. By RONALD MACDONALD. (Arnold, 6s.)

THESE stories have two characteristics in common. They are both polemics in the woman suffragist movement; and they are both extremely clever and well written. Where they differ is that Miss Robins presents the cause of the suffragettes in a story told gravely and earnestly, but with a burlesque ending. Mr. Macdonald’s is a flippant, irresponsible burlesque of the woman’s movement, with a *finale* of love-making that has been accounted serious by many generations of novel-readers. Mr. Macdonald can

hardly have parodied this book of Miss Robins's, though he has undoubtedly parodied the theme of Miss Robins's play, of which her story is an extension. Both stories should be read as near together as may be, and Miss Robins's should be read first in order to get the full, *pure* flavour of Mr. Macdonald's fun, wit, humour, sarcasm and irony. The subject lends itself naturally to Mr. Macdonald's method; but is rather intractable material for the novelist. Miss Robins's rendering of the persons and characters of the suffragists, their motives and methods, and their meetings is admirable, and with little sympathy for their cause or their manners we would prefer it, as regards truth, to Mr. Macdonald's unmitigatedly satirical treatment. She presents the suffragist arguments better than the ordinary suffragist articles and pamphlets do, but her fictional characters as personalities have no significance. It is not, perhaps, altogether out of range of possibility that a future Prime Minister may be forced to impose the policy of woman's suffrage on his party by way of reparation for a private wrong which he has done to a woman suffragist, but for the present it has the effect of a burlesque of an old novel *motif*. Besides this, Miss Robins lays her heroine open to the observation which women suffragists dislike so much: that they are moved by personal bitterness and disappointments, and, as Miss Levering, the suffragist heroine, puts it, hate all men because they hate Geoffrey Honor. Neither is Geoffrey Honor converted through the merits of the suffrage cause. Miss Levering drives him into a corner, and he has either to send off the fateful telegram to his party organisation or to lose Miss Dumbarton, whom he wants to marry. Whether political programmes may be shaped by such personal strife of man and woman we express no opinion, and we are also actually in the dark as to the result of the elections, though the inference is that the telegram is decisive, and that Geoffrey Honor is to be the next Conservative Premier, with a woman suffragist policy. We must not quarrel with a novelist's political prophecies; but, at any rate, a conversion of this kind does not throw much light on the rights or wrongs of the woman's suffragist movement. Miss Robins is not less indecisive than novelists usually are when they set themselves to attack or advocate particular social, political or religious causes. They do better when they give us interesting little sketches, as Miss Robins does, of living political persons; and her story is quite a *roman à clef* in this way. As to Mr. Macdonald's polemic, it is a clever statement of the repugnance which the majority of women certainly, and most men probably, feel against women politicians. But it is quite common form that his lady suffragist, the Lady Isabel Fenchurch, should be shamed and subdued by the devoted love and masculine superiority of a delightful man, her husband. What counts is the ingenious absurdity of the machinery: the Parliamentary election in which the husband opposes his wife on the *reductio ad absurdum* of her own principles—the disfranchisement of man; the American spiritualist millionaire, Byron F. Vincent, who runs the suffrage movement; and so on. Nor is the smartness of the writing the least element of pleasure. One quotation will be sufficient to indicate it:—

"Of course you can't understand me," said Lawless.

"Why is it 'of course'?" asked Isabel, wearily.

"Because, though a woman can believe anything she wants to understand, she can't understand anything she doesn't wish to believe."

A NEW MINSTREL

The Dance of Love. By DION CLAYTON CALTHROP.
(Duckworth & Co.)

MR. CALTHROP'S book is not a novel, but a very graceful phantasy. He chooses for period, the reign of

"Trissotin, Duke of Melinarde," a time vague enough to most of his readers to be called "olden." It will be sufficiently dated if we say that Pipin the hero wore, on occasion, one red hose and one white. But Mr. Calthrop's characters are quite modern, they are indeed *post* Stevenson and *post* Mr. Maurice Hewlett. Now, though Mr. Calthrop has ideas and methods in common with Robert Louis Stevenson, Stevenson had them in common with earlier writers, in fact, with Scott, and yet remains a charming and individual classic. Though Mr. Calthrop has not yet had time to become classic, he is already a charming and individual author. His style has not the art of Mr. Maurice Hewlett's, but the sources from which his style is drawn are not nearly so apparent, his puppets are less nimble than Mr. Hewlett's, but they are equally lifelike. Indeed, Mr. Hewlett could no more have written "The Dance of Love" than Mr. Calthrop could have written "Little Novels of Italy." Pipin is the youngest son of a Kentish knight and a lady from Southern France. He is a youth of twenty, his father is dead and his mother spoils him. He is volatile, affectionate and heartless in a very fascinating manner. His mother has once told him that there is one woman for him in the world, who keeps the key of his heart on a chain about her neck. He rides away from his father's castle to seek her in his mother's country. His quest is the dance of the will o' the wisp. He fancies that every woman he meets bears the key. On his way to Dover he falls in with the second hero of the story, a lying, thieving hero, a wise and eloquent knave, who, after trying to rob him, becomes his devoted servant and protector, and finally his good angel. In fact, Mr. Calthrop makes John Bonamico so attractive that, after landing his two heroes safely at Calais, he wisely separates them for a time to allow the younger, Pipin, to develop. The story leaps, and we find Pipin alone, a strolling jester after six years of wandering:

Much of the youth had gone from his face, but his full ripe mouth was not drawn thin and hard, and his eyes retained all their romantic fire . . . a furrow on his forehead showed a more deep-thinking disposition. . . . His freshness was gone; his heart was no longer susceptible to the allurements of a pretty girl. He had lived.

Nevertheless, he still retains much of his boyish attractiveness. It is now that Mr. Calthrop is at his best, when freed from the personality of Bonamico, he tell in his subtler manner the charming and pathetic story of Margot and the benevolent she-bear. Unfortunately, the absence of Bonamico permits the introduction of an infant phenomenon, too like the barley-sugar children who melt under the caresses of Mrs. Hodgson Burnett. Fortunately, the episode is short. With the return of Bonamico *ex machina*, we are plunged in the tragedy of Trissotin and Madora, his cruel and beautiful duchess, the Melusine of Pipin. It is a spirited and exciting story, and Mr. Calthrop makes his valleys of Gagnac and Melinarde a picturesque and characteristic *mise en scène*. Unhappily, the chain that bears the key of Pipin's heart is hung rather on a peg than a neck. Alice, who wears it, is the Pippa of the piece; she does not pass, except in rather painful interpolations, through the thoughts or dreams of Pipin. She sits rearing poultry at home. We know she must be there on the last page of the book, which will tell us of Pipin's homing to the poultry yard, when Mr. Calthrop naively addresses us on page 23:

Come along, I can hear you say, there's a horse waiting by the gate, the road invites, and here we are kept waiting for a boy and a girl in an orchard.

It would have been better if Alice had passed, for she will not pass muster with any other of Mr. Calthrop's delicate and fascinating creatures, Yolande, Philippa, Margot, Madora, Anita, Clare, who did not bear the key. Mr. Calthrop has sacrificed too much to high morality. His true and fine moral would unfold itself

effectively, and his story would develop more artistically if he could refrain from excessive emphasis. In the episode of Madora his symbolism runs completely away with him, the merest chance and the idlest word serve as large finger-posts pointing to the catastrophe. Where there is so much high light its effect in the picture is diminished. Some of our fellow critics have expressed the opinion that Mr. Calthrop's book will be either much liked or much disliked. It will certainly be much liked by those who value originality of idea and vivid, poetical expression, and we think that the insatiable readers of novels, who rather resent these merits, will forgive them in a short book full of attractive incidents related in an unusual form with considerable dramatic effect. We have not spared the blemishes of the book, but it leaves us with an extremely agreeable impression as a whole, and also in the persons of Pipin, Bonamico and, most of all, in that of the lovable Trissotin. Mr. Calthrop is least successful in Madora and the greedy and sinister steward, Eustorg. It is only with somewhat melodramatic effort that he can bring himself to contemplate the evil heart. We look with much pleasure to his future work.

THE STOOPING LADY

The Stooping Lady. By Maurice Hewlett. (Macmillan, 6s.)

A NEW novel by Maurice Hewlett must be regarded as an event in the literary year. He has a place apart among his contemporaries, and if we seek a comparison, can find it only in the work of two such dissimilar artists as George Meredith and Joseph Conrad. With them he shares in some degree a reputation for a nervous, tense faculty of characterisation and description; a meticulous accuracy in the choice of a word or a phrase. At this point, however, the simile fails, for whereas we feel that in the work of Joseph Conrad—despite subtle psychology—a keen observation directs and controls his pen, the work of Maurice Hewlett exhibits rather the creative imagination, the power of visualising, reconstructing scenes and persons that have never come within the range of physical vision. In "The Stooping Lady," it is almost possible to follow the evolution of the idea; one has a swift impression of the print that tells the whole story, and thereafter the persons becoming clothed, given atmosphere, a character, until we have incident dependent upon their personality, and forget that the incident came first—as seems inherently probable.

But the print, we have it described thus:

A fine young lady, bountifully enriched in form and hue, a very Hebe, in the tell-tale gown of the period—hiding little, suggesting much—stands with drooping head and hands clasped. She looks like a Circassian in the market place—exposed. Then, before her, rampant, is a florid youth, frock and aproned proper. He sharpens his blade on the steel, his starting eyes are fixed upon her, towards the region of the heart. It's not a bad likeness—makes him resemble the Prince as a young man, high-coloured, square-shouldered and fleshy. From the mouth issues a stream of air which, expanding as it ascends, enfolds a legend, "Cob-it, my hearty," we read; "it's prime meat, this year's lamb. Now, Miss, how will you have it cut?" In the background Mr. Cobbett, to be guessed by his broad back and gaiters, cries "Buy, buy, buy!" and exhibits crowned carcasses to the mob; while Captain Ranald, unmistakable in cocked hat, hacks with his regulation sword at a fine hog labelled "Caryll-cured."

Here, then, we have the gist of the whole affair, beginning with that fine young lady, bountifully enriched, and given an inimitable setting. Her name was Hermia Mary Chambre, and her mother was of the "Caryll" blood, but eloped with Colonel Richard Chambre—"Handsome Dick, Firebrand Dick, Dick of the Gallop, a cadet of a good English house settled in Ireland." We meet Hermia in the courtyard of the Caryll domain in London, an orphan and ward, inasmuch as the disposal of £500 a year may constitute guardianship, to old Lady Morfa, who is the figure-head, the ruler consultant and directant of the great

Caryll family and its countless dependencies, the representative of Blood and Place. At the other end of the scale we have as our third protagonist "the florid youth, frock and aproned"—a butcher's apron—"high-coloured, square-shouldered." This, for Hermia Mary, was to stoop indeed—but it was no mere fleshly romance. We have to be convinced—so far we have gone no further than to give atmosphere to the print. Now comes character and added incident; the youth aproned and thrice armed, the lady too proud to pass her family's injustice and endowed with a fine fearlessness, that dares the scorn of Blood and Place. Then the strange wooing of the Violet Intrigue; the gift of a bunch of white violets by some unknown, every day, to Hermia Mary, wherever she be, regardless of seasons, save only with a chivalrous break of a few months following the death of her brother. It is thus we are convinced, but lest any detail be lacking, we have an epilogue, an explanation in the mouth of Captain Ranald:

It was all gossamer web of her own spinning. The business was done in that visit of hers to Brook Street. She was there to sing small and she became small; the smaller she, the greater he. As she stooped, he towered up, higher and higher. She projected him as a god, and god he remained to the end of the chapter. All a generous figment of her brain.

A gossamer web, however, be it remarked, that was spun so strong, or protected so zealously, that it endured to the end. This, by suggestion, brings us back to our author, who has also spun his web and endowed Hermia Mary with his own faculty—or is it a function? It is almost painful, perhaps supererogatory, to descend to the detail of mere adjectival approbation. We have acknowledged conviction; is this not enough to show that "The Stooping Lady" is alive, real and enduring? This is the first consideration, for the rest we know of no book of Mr. Hewlett's that is more vivid, more graphic or more engrossing. We delight in his style, his similes, his brilliant flashes of humour, and occasionally in the glimpse we have of the Satyric horns, with which we have become so intimate in, say, "The Forest Lovers," or "Pan and the Young Shepherd."

SOME RECENT NOVELS

Laid up in Lavender. By STANLEY J. WEYMAN. (Smith, Elder and Co., 6s.)

FROM the name of this volume of short stories we gather that they are the early work of this well-known writer of romances, and from the note at the beginning of the book we learn that they have already appeared in magazines. We do not, however, propose to imitate the dying British chieftain of historical drama, who with prophetic eye sees the future glories of England, even down to her express trains and motor-omnibuses; and so declare that we see the Stanley Weyman we know so well in these tales. That is a sorry device; but we do think that, if it had been our fortune to review this volume as the first effort of a new writer, we might have found good reason to believe that the remarkable power of invention these tales display would land the writer into a good place among our writers of fiction. There is nothing here to lead anyone to suppose that historical fiction would be his field, for everything is modern. In two stories at least—"Gerald" and "Family Portraits"—we may justifiably feel, perhaps, that a greater probability would be gained by putting back their date a century or two; but on the whole the dozen stories may be read and enjoyed without seeking to find a parallel between them and "The Red Cockade" or "Count Hannibal," or any of the series of romances which have made the author the most popular romance writer of the day.

These twelve stories are really so different that it is very difficult to chose any one of them as being the best;

indeed, they are all good stories, and each of them causes something of that feeling of excitement which Mr. Weyman knows so well how to produce. Only in one of them do we get a hint of whom the writer has become since he wrote it. In the story called "Bab" we read:

"You have won a man's heart and cast it aside to gratify an old pique. You may rest content now, for there is nothing wanting to your vengeance. You have given me as much pain as a woman, the vainest and the most heartless, can give a man. Good-bye."

With that I was leaving her, fighting my own pain and passion, so that the little hands she raised as though they would ward off my words, were nothing to me

and on the next page: "Oh, Bab, I love you so!" But in the books of which this reminds us it would not have been a few lines that divided the two statements, but many, many chapters. Mr. Weyman will, we are sure, forgive us when we say that, good as these stories are, we still infinitely prefer the romances.

The Weavers: A Tale of England and Egypt of Fifty Years Ago. By GILBERT PARKER. (Heinemann, 6s.)

THOUGH in recent years politics have seriously engaged Sir Gilbert Parker, this story shows that he is still to be reckoned with as a novelist. "The Weavers," indeed, is an excellent book and splendid reading. Alike in the manner and matter of the story, there are the ease and fulness that come of both the writer's and the reader's assured interest in the career of David Claridge—a Quaker stripling, whose utter truth and ignorance of duplicity raise him to favour with the Khedive and make him virtual ruler of Egypt. It is easy to see that for the prototype of this strong, infinitely simple hero, whose power is wholly that of the spirit that waits on God, the novelist has studied the character of Gordon and his work in China and Egypt. Sunday-school piety and appreciation have hitherto claimed Gordon as their own peculiar model of virtue, and his simple greatness has suffered accordingly. Outside and beyond the national honour that is his by right, Gordon stands a singularly moving figure, a Don Quixote of Christendom. His was the power of the pure in heart, which in the strength of the unseen and eternal subjugated and dominated the powers of this world. In the fictitious character of David Claridge one is made to understand the amazing, almost incredible influence which Gordon exerted over Oriental peoples, and, indeed, over all with whom he came in contact. That this is one done with conviction and without degeneration into either priggishness on the one hand, or melodrama on the other, is not least among the triumphs of "The Weavers." We shudder to reflect how Mr. Hall Caine would have mangled and eviscerated the theme. But in handling it, it seems almost as if Sir Gilbert Parker had caught something of the tender austerity and simplicity of the Quakers of whom he writes. Gordon, of course, was not a Quaker, but in making David Claridge a Friend by birth and upbringing, the novelist has gone far to elucidate the problem of the spiritual power which such practical mystics possess. Those to whom it has been given to know Friends of the older school and generation will recognise the grace with which Sir Gilbert Parker has depicted the life of the Quaker community at Hamley, with its rarefied spiritual, social and mental atmosphere. Yet the English scenes in the book are the least satisfactory, and we genuinely regret the framework of the plot—a secret marriage, concealed parentage, and a usurping half-brother. We admit its usefulness in giving form to the story, which, however, gathers interest from the record of David Claridge's work in Egypt, and the play and interplay of absolute sincerity with Oriental wiles and stratagems. Here the vitality of the story lies, and its quiet, unaffected progress grips the reader, so that the occasional transfer of attention to London drawing-rooms is rather annoy-

ing. Almost abruptly, somewhat unsatisfactorily, the story comes to a conventional happy ending, with which we feel inclined to quarrel, because the book, as a whole, stands on a higher plane than that of a tale that is told. Nahoum's sudden deflection from the achievement of his revenge is dramatic rather than real. A finer and truer effect would have been obtained if use had been made of the incident which roused Gordon to the one hour of rage in his life, when he took up a rifle and set out to find and shoot Li Hung Chang. But in a short preface Sir Gilbert Parker expressly disowns any consistent following of actual history; so that, taking "The Weavers" as no more than a story, we will content ourselves with again expressing the admiration and high enjoyment which it has given us.

The Abductors. By JOSEPH PRAGUE. (Greening, 6s.)

"THE ABDUCTORS," or, adds Mr. Prague, "A Week in Vienna." We remember reviewing a novel, two hundred and fifty pages of which were occupied by a description of a conversation between two people—a man and a woman, of course—during a comparatively short railway journey. It was very cleverly done, and we read the first two hundred and twenty pages with undisguised delight; at the end of the remaining thirty we felt unutterably bored—not because they were less clever than their predecessors, but because we were surfeited and had begun to read more slowly, and to think as we read. Mr. Prague's book reminds us of that journey in the railway carriage. It shows very considerable ability, here and there more than ordinary cleverness, but it leaves us dull and rather bored. The week in Vienna, which forms its subject, was packed full of incident as a week well could be, and the incidents were exciting enough, if a trifle hackneyed. But an unbroken week of Dr. Johnson's conversation would have driven a man to cynicism, drink, or a lunatic asylum; and similarly Mr. Prague's clever shots falling like hailstones about us, and doing no real damage, become a little wearisome. If he chose an open field instead of a cupboard in which to discharge them, and fired a little less often, he would become a greater man. A Morris-tube is scarcely the thing for him. His work leaves much to be desired, but it is not the work of a commonplace mind. We shall look forward to reading a book by him written, say, five years hence.

The Little Anarchist. B. A. W. MARCHMONT. (Ward, Lock and Co., 6s.)

THOSE who know Mr. Marchmont's previous books will only need to be told that the scene of his latest novel is laid in Russia, to have a very fair comprehension of what it is like. There is a wonderful Englishman, strong and square of jaw, a useful man with a revolver, a speaker of many languages, rich, honourable—a veritable hero. There is a beautiful Russian princess who is all that a Russian princess (of the heroine kind) should be. There are bombs, strikers, fights, plots and counter plots, through which the wonderful Englishman and the beautiful Russian make their way, by means of a useful mixture of coolness and good luck.

The book is too breathless to be a good specimen of its class, the perils and struggles of its characters succeeding each other with a rapidity that makes them monotonous, and robs them of their excitement. It is possible to have too much story even in a novel about Russia, and in reading Mr. Marchmont's book we find ourselves wishing at times that the hero would perish, if only that the clash and tumult of his adventures might cease. But to the young and to the boyish of heart this book should have its appeal.

Tales of Two People. By ANTHONY HOPE. (Methuen, 6s.)

It is always pleasant to wander into Mr. Anthony Hope's delicate world of unrealities, where cultured swordsmen and delightful duchesses spend their lives in the solving of problems that do not greatly interest them, and where men and women are well-mannered even in their emotions, so that their hysterics are under an exquisite restraint and their oaths display a subtle knowledge of the balance and construction of emphatic sentences. In this world Mr. Hope is absolute tyrant, and he satisfies his passion for vivisection by laying bare the motives and loves of his characters with an unfaltering hand, and analysing them with a cruel directness that should raise a protest from our humanitarians. From the point of view of fiction this method has its drawbacks; for though we feel that Mr. Hope's analysis is exact and his deductions true, we are not accustomed in regarding life to have so full a view of it, and hence there is that air of unreality about Mr. Hope's romances which we have mentioned above. It is as if a photographer to whom we had sat for our likeness were to produce an X-ray photograph that displayed our ribs and the pennies in our pocket, but failed to give any definite impression of our decorative exterior.

Yet when we have made this stricture, we must accept Mr. Anthony Hope as a novelist of high achievement, and his newly collected volume of short stories as worthy of its author. As their title suggests, they are all stories of which the interest centres round the doings of two main characters, and Mr. Hope is always at his best in describing the delicate intellectual struggle between men and women whose affinities render love a matter of difficulty. All the stories in this book are good, but if we had to express a preference, we should choose the ingenious and sympathetic tale entitled "Mrs. Thistleton's Princess." The last two stories of the book are more frivolous than Mr. Hope is wont to be, and very pretty fooling, so that we hope to meet his eccentric Grace the Duke of Belleville (which you must pronounce to rhyme with devil) on some future occasion. We cannot escape the consciousness that Mr. Hope is sometimes a little too clever; but we have to read him nevertheless.

All Moonshine. By RICHARD WHITEING. (Hurst and Blackett, 6s.)

MR. RICHARD WHITEING pondered long and deeply on the ills of humanity, then went to bed and had a nightmare, which he duly recorded in the morning. Now, an allegory is a fairly safe vehicle for a writer who wishes to air his views irresponsibly, but an allegory which is also a nightmare is a marvel of ingenuity. The author has but to take one pet theory after another, tumbling them out pell-mell, in any order, for are not dreams notoriously incongruous? He may be as fantastic in his choice of illustration as he chooses, for dreams are usually fantastic; he may be as extravagant in his statements as he pleases, for dreams are always extravagant. In a word, he has as free a hand as his brother enthusiast who writes "novels with a purpose," with this one great advantage, that his situations are subservient to his theories, he creates them as he requires them with no thought of coherence, whereas the novelist must work his theories as best he can into certain situations. Thus, because it is "all moonshine," Mr. Whiteing's hero is able to be present at one of the bloodiest engagements of the Russo-Japanese war and at an imaginary battle between this country and Germany in the Isle of Wight (two admirable examples with which to illustrate the author's opinions on the subject of warfare) within the same five minutes. Mr. Whiteing is interesting in spite of the fantastic trap-

pings of his hobby-horse, for which we cannot do better than quote his own apology:

"Things could not pass so," you say: "matter and spirit incoherently jumbled and mixed, space annihilated, day and night confounded, the very sun standing still." Exactly, that is how they do pass, in the dreamland."

A Hole in the Coat. By CHARLES EDDY. (Cassell, 6s.)

"WHEN there's a hole in the coat, there's a pickthank to spy it," is an old saying. In Mr. Eddy's story the pickthank is so busy with his spying that he forgets to mend his own garment, and retribution falls upon him unawares. He is a peculiarly unpleasant individual, and Mr. Eddy has drawn him well. The narrator of the tale is a homely but faithful secretary, whose employer, Lady Pat, gambles not wisely but too well on the Stock Exchange. She is making a fortune when she gets into the hands of the pickthank and his gang. She is beggared, but is rescued by her friends, who rally round her and lead her in triumph from the bankruptcy court to the altar, where she bestows her hand on a bucolic country squire and speculates no more. The faithful secretary has to be content with many tearful thanks and a post in the Home Office.

The Mystery of the Unicorn. By SIR WILLIAM MAGNAY, BART. (Ward, Lock and Co., 6s.)

"THE Mystery of the Unicorn" begins excellently well with the heading of chapter one, "The Story of a Lost Way and a Strange House," which is precisely how a tale of this kind should start, and at once puts us in train for great events; nor can it be said that the promise of the opening is in any way belied by what follows.

Even without the assurance of the title-page, Sir William Magnay's latest novel would be obvious as the work of no 'prentice hand. In construction it is built upon pleasantly familiar lines. There is a villain who stops at little or nothing in the pursuit of his wicked ends, an eligible hero, a lovely heroine, and a crime-investigator of the accepted type. But it is all told with considerably more gaiety and ease of style than is customary in tales of the same genre, those, that is to say, that depend rather upon startling incident than upon subtlety of characterisation.

Truth to tell, the latter element in "The Mystery" is no very great matter. The crime-investigator has a sufficiency of courage and assurance to put us at our ease as to his ultimate success, but that is all. We are not indeed greatly concerned about the fate of the lovers, whose tenders passages are not so much vital to the story as breathing spaces between the shocks of the main intrigue. What we do very greatly and insistently want to know is, Who was Sir Francis Cardale? and how did the Unicorn come to be turned round? and we are mistaken if any reader will be willing to lay the volume aside while either of these problems remains unsolved.

There is at least one notable departure from convention in the book. Even when the chapter called "Cardale's Story" has explained the mystery, Sir William Magnay holds yet another and final thrill in reserve, which is, as it were, a bonus for those who at this point might well expect nothing more than to see the virtuous living happy ever after. In short, "The Mystery of the Unicorn" is a capital example of its class, which in its present form will give pleasure to a very considerable public, and should make an even wider appeal when, as must inevitably happen, it reappears in the sixpenny covers that are now become the hall-mark of popular success.

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DR. STIGGINS: HIS VIEWS AND PRINCIPLES

A Series of Addresses delivered by that Gentleman to his Flock
No. V.

I AM almost afraid that in spite of the long talks we have had together I have somewhat neglected what, after all, was to have been the main object of these pleasant afternoons. When you so kindly consented to assist me in giving to the world the views of Free Churchmen, I think there was a distinct understanding that our chief consideration was to be the Free Churches themselves, looked upon as a great body of closely allied Christians who are prepared to offer their system to the world as an alternative to the ecclesiasticism which has in the past usurped the name of Christianity. For many ages, as you must know, the ears of men have been deafened by the clamorous debates of contending sects, who built upon the simple foundations of the Gospel their fantastic and complicated edifices, each widely differing from its neighbour, and each, if but poorly provided with the sanitary arrangements of real Christian piety, amply furnished, at all events, with a bristling armoury of controversial weapons, and with the boiling lead of theological acerbity. Arians and Catholics, Manicheans and Copts, Orthodox Greeks and Basilidians, Armenians and Anglicans raised their voices so loudly against one another that the thoughtful, as I say, were puzzled, and were content to stay without these contending folds (or rather camps), satisfying their religious instincts with the simple charities of the Gospel. And for some time after the Reformation, I am afraid, the Evangelical bodies perpetuated to a certain extent the evil leaven which had been handed down to them, and strove together about questions which seemed to them of vast importance, but which we perceive to have been misunderstandings about trifles. Thus Calvin burned Servetus, thus Presbyterian contended with Independent, thus the Baptists were forced to leave Boston, and thus the Orthodox Church of Massachusetts was tempted into courses of some severity against the Quakers. And even in our own time I remember that excellent, though old-fashioned minister, Mr. Spurgeon, speaking with some severity of what he called the "Down grade" tendency in the Free Church ministry.

Thank heaven! all that is over; we have perceived, I repeat, that the disputes which agitated the old Catholic and Arian sects and all the other bodies of puzzle-headed and cantankerous metaphysicians, which troubled to a less degree the peace of our Puritan forefathers, we have perceived that these disputes were mere quarrels over a diphthong, mere logomachies over trifles which neither party understood, which it is not important that anyone should understand. The angry battle clouds have been dispersed by the Liberal breezes that have blown from heaven, and in their places we see the great Free Church Denominations, divided, perhaps, mechanically, but really, and spiritually, and vitally united, forming the true Catholic Church of to-day.

It was of this great body, its aims and its principles, that I chiefly desired to discourse to you; but I am afraid that we have delayed so long amongst rather secondary considerations, in the outworks and exterior walls of the edifice as it were, that I shall be obliged to be somewhat brief in discussing our vital principles—the keep on which our flag floats boldly in the breeze. However, while we talked about the public Press, the superiority of America, the study of history, literature, art, the drama, the future life, and other cognate topics, you must have gathered a good deal by the way, and perhaps the omission I have mentioned has been more formal than real.

But, briefly to return to first principles; you will, of course, understand that the Free Churches have but one foundation—the Bible. There is no other foundation on which man can build than on the dear Old Book which for more than three hundred years has been the Englishman's greatest treasure, which to us seems, almost exclusively, an English book. We do not care to discuss with prying ecclesiastical antiquarians the question of the original formation of the New Testament; we just accept the dear old story as the Reformers gave it to us, and by us it shall be defended to the last against the Popish priest and the Ritualist parson. Yes; the Bible is our dearest and best possession, and we would gladly die for it.

But what do we mean by the Bible? Not the dead letter, which, as Paul observes, killeth; not the mere mechanical text? No; we value the book, not the binding; the precious liquor, not the vessel that contains it; the spirit, not the letter; the spirit as interpreted by ourselves, on whom through the liberal and scientific progress of the last century the ends of the world are come. It is an instance of the essential and vital union that exists in the Free Churches, in spite of apparent divisions, that Dr. Forrest, the Presbyterian minister, and Mr. Kelly, the ex-president of the Wesleyan Conference, agree on this great principle—dogma (which is of the letter) is of no consequence. The ethic of a nation is its life, says Dr. Forrest, contrasting America with Spain, the rich and prosperous country with the poor; and Mr. Kelly says the same thing in other words when he told the young ministers that dogma to be tolerated must be practical. The age in which men squabbled about the *Homoousion* and the *Filioque* clause is gone for ever; and we should receive the Pelagians and the Albigenses to-day with the open arms of Christian fellowship. No, it is not the letter of the Old Book which we revere with such intensity; it is the exquisite spirit which exhales from those wondrous leaves, the spirit which has banished all ugly words and ugly things, such as heresy and schism, from our hearts and our lives, which makes us one in a sense which the world cannot understand.

And I would have you note that even in the early days of Puritanism this great truth was not without its witnesses. Martin Luther himself, the chief of all Protestants, when he denounced the Epistle of James as an "epistle of straw," because he did not agree with its doctrine, spoke in the spirit of a Free Churchman of to-day, though we may not imitate the hearty bluntness of the great Reformer. Milton, too, understood how to transcend the letter when he published his famous manifesto on Divorce, anticipating by more than two centuries the grand liberty of the United States; and even the Anglican reformers saw something of the truth when they quietly dismiss Unction as a "corrupt following of the Apostles." But while the Anglican seems to be endeavouring to bind the chains of the letter more tightly than ever about him, we have become still more free, released at last from that cramping dungeon cell of literal dogma, the spiritual type, and no doubt the efficient cause of the dungeons and racks of the Inquisition.

I have already told you that the Free Church outlook is in the first place ethical, and, in my first conversation I showed you that it is in America that our ethic is most fully and completely realised. I have explained that while our moral code is built upon the foundation of the New Testament, it is rather a healthy and consistent development than a mechanical replica of the gospel system of morals. For example, we do not keep the best seats in our churches for beggars, persons in ragged or shabby clothing, or costermongers in their working dress. Our ministry, we conceive, is to the comparatively well-to-do sheep of the house of England, and my little boy in his touching picture of the

future life imaged forth, accurately enough, the kind of congregation that we like to see about us. I daresay you will have observed that Christian churches are not very plentiful in the really poor neighbourhoods, whose degraded inhabitants we leave to the more degraded—because superstitious—ministrations of parson and priest. Take again the question of celibacy. I daresay several texts will occur to you: there is the "made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake," there is Paul's distinct recommendation of celibacy as the higher and better state, there is the weird procession of the Virgins in the Revelation of John. For a man of leisure with an interest in such questions I can conceive of no more agreeable occupation than that of tracing the evolution of the modern Protestant view of the subject from these crude beginnings. You are, of course, aware that we have always denounced in the strongest terms the celibate vows of priests and monks and nuns, both as highly displeasing to the Almighty, and as leading in practice to the grossest and most abominable vice. We have contrasted the high ideals of the marriage state held in Protestant countries such as America with the notorious and blatant immorality of all Romanist nations; we have not spared the world our views as to priests' "nieces" or as to the internal economy of convents. Truly the ways of Evolution are mysterious; and it should be, as I say, an interesting task to trace the steps by which the bud, as it were, of the Old Gospel has unfolded into the perfect blossom of our faith to-day.

I could give you many other instances of the same kind. Usury, for example, was, I believe, unknown in the early Christian communities, and was forbidden by the grotesque Scholastic Philosophy. I need not argue this point, for since the whole of our great Commercial System hangs on the giving of interest, it would be otiose to point out that any texts which seem to forbid this practice cannot be taken in their literal sense. But there is another point which I cannot pass by, since it is concerned with the very foundation and bed-rock of all that is best and holiest and most secure in the modern Christian State. You will remember such texts as "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," "honour the King," and "be subject unto the higher powers, the powers that be are ordained of God"; you will remember, too, David's horror at the thought of laying hands upon the "Lord's Anointed." Leaving for the moment the superstitious fears of the young guerilla chief, I presume you know something of the character and origin of the Roman Emperors in the days we are speaking of. In the first place, supposing that there could be a legitimate title to such a thing as kingship (which I do not admit for a moment), the title of these men was as bad as bad can be, since it was simply founded on carnage and proscription, and on the shameless violation of the Roman Republican Constitution. The first Emperors sailed to power on a sea of blood and terror, and compared with them Napoleon III. appears a harmless constitutional sovereign. Passing from their public to their private characters we find them stained with every cruel and abominable vice, crime, and wickedness of which humanity at its very worst is capable; their lives are, as it were, the epitome of all the evil of the world; and the horrible barbarities which they used to the Christians seem almost a trifle when compared with the unspeakable, almost incredible catalogue of their other vices. Let us remember, then, that these were the "powers that be," of which the apostle speaks, such were the kings that were to be honoured, these the Cæsars to whom tribute was to be given; and let me ask you whether you can imagine a more violent contrast than that which exists between such teaching and the great vital truths of Democracy in which we live and move and have our being to-day. Frankly, we

should be false to all our best and most dearly bought principles if, for example, we rendered to Cæsar the things supposed to be Cæsar's, without first enquiring whether the rule of Cæsar was "broad based upon the people's will," whether the tribute proposed had been ratified by the chosen representatives of the people, elected on a liberal franchise, and finally whether the money when collected would be put to uses which we could thoroughly approve. These, or so I have always understood, are the first principles and rudiments of free popular government, "by the people, for the people, and through the people"; and it will be seen that there are no "powers that be" in existence; though there may be delegates chosen for convenience by the sovereign populace. As for government which is *not* popular, which exists, not by the will of the majority, but in virtue of such a principle as heredity, appealing, perhaps, to imaginary celestial sanctions, and fortified by fetish-ceremonies such as "coronation" and "unction" bestowed by medicine-men, alias bishops: it is the duty of every free man and every Free Churchman not merely *not* to be "subject" to such powers, not merely *not* to honour such kings, but rather to strain every nerve, to use every means (including armed revolution and assassination) to destroy so infamous a tyranny. Unless this be our doctrine nowadays, I am at a loss to understand our attitude towards the Cæsar of Russia and his oppressed and downtrodden people, I am at a loss to understand our sympathy with Garibaldi and Mazzini, with the heroes of the French Revolution, with the Fathers of the great Republic of the United States, and finally with our ancestors, the men who judged and put to death Charles Stuart.

No: "the letter killeth," and it is the spirit and not the letter of the Grand Old Book that we follow in these and in all other instances. We are the heirs of the ages, the products of the grand process of Evolution, and it is thus that we may claim to be the true and earnest disciples of the Inspired Volume. Should we welcome the claim of a primitive man, if such a being existed now, to be the only true man, to be our superior in manhood? Surely not; we should drive the hairy and apelike creature from us with contempt and disgust; and with the same feelings we repel the claims of Tories and Sacredotalists to be the true interpreters of the Sacred Text.

By analogy, then, you will easily conjecture that as our ethic is evolutionary so also are our dogmatic and our liturgic. Our great dogma, if I may say so, is that dogmas do not greatly matter, or in the words of Pope:

For modes of faith, let graceless zealots fight;
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right.

Hence the profound gulf which separates us from the Romanists and Ritualists who, it is well known, believe that morals are not of the slightest consequence, that all the commandments may be broken with impunity, so long as certain doctrines are held and certain superstitious ceremonies performed. Needless to say, we do not go to the other extreme; we are free to hold what dogmas we will, so long as they are not displeasing to our friends in other denominations, since we are not at liberty to profess doctrine which practically "unchurches" whole bodies of earnest and devoted Christians. We are free, I should rather say, to hold whatever dogmas we please so long as we do not hold them with that "passionate certainty" which has been rebuked by an earnest minister of the Establishment, with that acerbity which is sure to follow such certainty, which brings us sooner or later to the painful and uncharitable pass of denouncing the many good men who are unable to accept the literal doctrine of the Divinity of Christ as not Christians.

For, rightly or wrongly, many of us have long felt that the time is past for fervid discussion, for earnest

and vehement affirmation on this and on similar topics. The age is a practical age, an ethical age, as Mr. Kelly and Dr. Forrest have affirmed, and I think we are all inclined to echo the amusing outburst of the minister of the Establishment, to say: "Hang Theology!—and let us tax ground values." The age is a hurrying and strenuous age, with real work in the world to be accomplished; we cannot afford to discuss the niceties of expression of early Christian metaphysicians while valuable land is left undeveloped owing to the injustice of the laws.

Besides, are not the times "out of joint" for such questions as these? Do we not all feel in our hearts, if we are honest men, that in the whole atmosphere of the Gospel Story, literally understood, there is something strange, unreal, thaumaturgic? We must remember that the East never changes, that the dreamy, mystical Oriental was much the same in Palestine in the first century as he is in India to-day. And such a man as this was of a very different character from the bustling, energetic citizen of London and Chicago. He was not whirled to and fro morning and evening by train or tram, his mind active and busy with schemes in progress or in contemplation; nor was he compelled to strain every nerve, every capacity of his body through a long day of business; every brain-cell alert lest money should not be made, or lest money should be lost. The Syrian peasant, we may almost say, had no healthy interests in life; not only was he totally devoid of business instincts and of all opportunities for using such faculties had he possessed them; but he lacked all the other interests which nowadays go to the making of a good citizen and an earnest Christian. Consider, for example, how much of the time of the energetic man of this age is taken up by politics, both local and general. In America, indeed, so engrossing and so important has this function of life become that it has been found necessary to make it a regular and recognised profession, a profession which has to be learned like any other, for which there are special aptitudes needed, in which hard, intelligent, and patient work is executed, which, like other professions, gives to the successful a great reward. In England we are still hampered by the decaying relics of the Feudal System; yet, in our rather casual, amateurish way the work is done, and many worthy and public-spirited men are found ready to serve the people even on the comparatively humble Board of Guardians without any official fee. How different was it in Jerusalem, in Bethlehem, in Nazareth of old! The politics of a Syrian peasant consisted chiefly in doing what he was told, and in bearing with what patience he could command the exactions of his superiors. He was told no doubt in words more or less anticipatory of the Anglican Catechism to honour and obey Caesar and all that were put in authority under him, to submit himself to all his governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters, to order himself lowly and reverently to all his betters, and to do his duty in that state of life in which it has pleased* God to call him.

From such a man as this it would, of course, be as absurd to expect our modern mental and moral activities as it would be to search for such qualities in the mind of a recluse or monk of the Dark Ages; and can we not understand how to these simple peasants, whose days were spent perhaps in a round of dreamy and mystic meditation, the world must have put on the appearance of a weird phantasmagoria? To these men, watching their sheep on the solitude of the Syrian hills, a very ordinary phenomenon might appear to be the opening of the heavens, and the excited imagination of the visionary would readily fill in all appropriate details. We may not dogmatise, we may not positively assert that here lies the explanation of an astounding history;

* There is a slight mistake here, but I give the phrase in the words of Dr. Stiggins.—A. M.

but at all events do not let us be too ready to condemn the earnest and devoted Christians whom such an explanation satisfies. And, if we take this as our keynote, much that has perplexed and grieved devout minds will become clear. We must not, of course, too rigidly prescribe the bounds of nature, for this is not the method of true science, and doubtless the mysterious phenomena of the hypnotic, telepathic and cataleptic conditions will explain many things that have seemed puzzling; but speaking generally, there are very few of the so-called miraculous occurrences in the Gospels that cannot be accounted for by the fact that the Oriental peasant was, and always has been, of a credulous and dreamy nature, prone to view the world as a vision, and to express his experiences in terms of the marvellous. Let us remember, then, that it was by and for such men that the Great Story was written; and while we may heartily acquit the writers of any attempt to deceive, we must not be too harsh towards those who are unable to accept the Gospel narrative with the same profound and literal belief that they accord to the items in their morning paper. After all, we may still show goodwill to men, even if the angels who sang the words only existed in the heated brains of the Shepherds; and if it should be proved that Lazarus was a cataleptic, the lesson would remain, and we would still, I hope, support the work of the great London Hospitals.

In all sincerity and humility I must say that it seems to me that this is the safer way of regarding these wondrous old records; if we are to be, as Mr. Kelly advises us, *practical*, if we are to utter the message that has been entrusted to us, so that it may be understood by the people; for otherwise we become but as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. Science, of course, has not uttered her last word; it is possible that that which now seems incredible may be demonstrated in a thousand laboratories; but in the meanwhile let us beware how we estrange the least of these little ones, of these timid and doubting, but earnest and devoted spirits who merely ask us not to confound super-naturalism with religion. Let us remember that, so far, no man of science has pronounced in favour of the resurrection of the dead; let us not, then, turn anxious and enquiring souls away by passionately insisting on belief in such a dogma.

And when we have set aside the strange, the thaumaturgic elements in the story, how immensely valuable is the remnant! The Herald Angels, as I have remarked, will still press on us the duty of goodwill to men, still the Sacred Page will warn us to be as meek and lowly as our social positions permit, still we shall give alms to the poor, not, it is true, after the demoralising and degrading fashion of the East, but in such taxation as a progressive Government may think best. And, after all, perhaps, the old ideal of the union of Church and State may receive a new meaning in our day; little by little, it may be, technical, mechanical religion may tend to disappear, and the religion of the future may turn out to be simply a name for enlightened, altruistic, and progressive political energies. It is a strange, a solemn thought that in a hundred years' time man may find expression for all his feelings of awe and adoration by attending Liberal meetings, and the proceedings of the House of Commons may become the supreme worship of the nation. Then, perhaps, for the first time men will understand the vision of John, who saw the Heavenly City, like a Bride, descending upon earth. We cannot realise it yet; but what if "Order, order, order" were the *Sanctus* of the future?

But, at all events, after what I have told you of our Ethic and Dogmatic, I need scarcely say that our Liturgic does not profess to be a literal following of any Apostolic system. I know that many of my brethren think otherwise; they assert that a Free Church service is a reproduction of Christian worship as it was

in the earliest ages. But, as I have pointed out, this is *a priori* unlikely; for if our theory of doctrine and morals differs, as it assuredly does, from the theory of the Syrian Christians, is it not probable that our ideals of public worship will be very different from theirs? Let us remember, of you please, that the first Christians were Orientals, and therefore addicted to an elaborate system of outward forms and ceremonies. Moreover, they were Jews, to whom ritual was the very life of religion, whose every hour and action were regulated by ceremonial observances, who were accustomed to regard all the pomp and show of the Temple services as the appointed and quickening images and patterns of eternal and heavenly realities. We are not surprised, then, to learn that both the Master and His disciples were devout and fervent attendants at these services, that all through the Gospels the Jewish ritual and ceremonial law is treated with reverence and respect. I need not dwell on the sacramental nature of Christianity as it is presented to us in these early documents—on such symbolisms as oil, water, bread, wine, the imposition of hands, the ceremony of breathing, the ceremonial washing ordered in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the elaborate ritual of John's heaven—for it seems to me that from the nature of the case early Christianity could not fail to be a ceremonial and ritual religion; and such, accordingly, we find that it had become when it emerged from the darkness and the dangers of the catacombs. How should it not be so? If we find a censer in the hands of an angel in the Revelation, why should we be astonished to find a censer in the hands of the Bishop of Jerusalem in the fourth century?

And for the life of me I cannot understand why this truth should perplex and distress earnest and devout Christians. Our morals are a development; are we to expect, then, that our worship should be an exception and refuse to follow the great law of evolution? Of course, John and his fellow disciples were Ritualists, but I have given excellent reasons why we should not follow their example. John no doubt believed that the earth was immovable, that the sun rose and set, and that the Psalms were written by King David—we know that he believed in the existence of "sorcerers"—are we, therefore, to share his belief on these points? And if not, are we to be tied down to his theory and practice of Divine worship? The question answers itself; and till the Great Consummation that I have hinted at arrives, we shall do well to follow in the steps of Calvin and stout John Knox, and to conduct our services in a manner as remote from the practice and ideals of the early Christians as are the meetings of a public company.

For let it not be forgotten that ritual is the expression of belief. Those old Syrians, with all their piety, were Sacramentalists to the backbone; to them the visible and tangible world was but the symbol of the heavenly realities, and they undoubtedly believed that by a consecrating word, by the touch of blessing the veil might be removed, the dead matter might become quick, and earthly things become the vehicle of celestial virtues. A few years ago, before I received a call to my present ministry, I was induced by an Anglican friend to attend a service in a church of the Establishment. He hoped, I think, that I should be favourably impressed by the "performance" for which the church in question is famous; but I need scarcely tell you that my feelings were those of disgust and horror. The moment I entered the doors of the edifice my nostrils were saluted with the sickening fumes of incense, and unless I am much mistaken there was a vessel containing "holy water" inside the church, into which some members of the congregation dipped their hands, making the superstitious sign of the cross upon their breasts with the "consecrated" fluid. The roof was richly and strangely painted; there were carved and gilded images

in a side chapel, and across the church ran a screen, surmounted by a crucifix, beside which there were two more images. The "altar," of course, was decorated with a cross or crucifix, and I was horrified to see four great candles burning in full daylight. All around me people were kneeling down, and, I have no doubt, worshipping the crucifixes and other images. The service began; a strange droning music of a wild and barbarous nature, more like an incantation of savages than the vocal praise of Christians, filled the building and produced in me a feeling of horror and repulsion that I am at a loss to express. I cannot describe these terrible proceedings at length; the strange gestures of the ministers in their Popish vestments, the thick smoke of the incense, the burning lights, and above all the weird rise and fall of that dreadful music made me feel as if I were under the influence of some horrible drug, and I wondered whether if I made an effort I could shake off the oppression of the awful sights and sounds and odours about me, and wake up in my peaceful home in Cricklewood. At last, to my unutterable relief, an old minister (the Dean of Westminster, as I was afterwards informed) began to preach. I shall never forget my sense of escape when I heard this excellent man characterise the conduct of the woman who touched the Master's garment as "superstitious," and I was able to witness the rest of the impious and idolatrous ceremony with something approaching indifference.

But, of course, the good dean was perfectly right; and not only this poor foolish woman, but the whole population of the country was no doubt sunken in the grossest sacramentalism—which is but another name for superstition. These deluded people believed, as we know, that dreams warned them of future events, that lunatics were persons possessed of devils, that the sick could be cured by bathing in holy wells, that the Spirit of God could be given by the imposition of human hands, that the diseased were made well, and the evil spirits expelled by "handkerchiefs and aprons" which had been touched by Paul, who himself credited such superstitions as witchcraft and the Evil Eye.

I need not tell you that such conceptions as these are utterly and completely foreign to all Protestant teaching with which I am acquainted; we no longer believe that the sick in body or mind can be made whole with ceremonies and oils, we no longer believe that we become inheritors of heaven at the touch of a drop of water, and as we have ceased to wash ceremonially before the Ordinance, so we have reduced it from a great, mystic Sacrifice and Sacrament to a touching pledge of Christian goodwill and fraternity. Evolution is justified of her children; we have submitted ourselves gladly and joyfully to her benign sway, while the Ritualist still believes that his child receives divine grace from the pat of an old gentleman called a bishop. He has stopped at the stage which was occupied by those simple and devout, but ignorant and superstitious peasants of Syria, nineteen hundred years ago.

But superstitions that may have been edifying, or at least harmless, "on account of their ignorance," in the mental backwoods of ancient Palestine are to-day in free, Protestant, commercial England a danger and a disgrace; and those who teach such deadly figments must be opposed relentlessly, incessantly, in season and out of season. It may be that, in the scheme of Evolution, a religion of human sacrifice was the only possible one for our far-off British ancestors; but should we tolerate such cruel and devilish rites now in this happy Protestant country? No: and already see the lines formed, the men at arms arrayed, the glitter of the weapons and the waving of the banners: I hear the pealing of the trumpets and the heavy roll of drums, as legion after legion closes its ranks; already is begun the great battle between two great hosts—between the armies of Sacramentalism and Anti-Sacramentalism.

There are defections, on one side and on the other, as the true issue is apprehended, and now you understand why we Free Churchmen are able to range ourselves with the so-called Atheists of France, with Gambetta and Combes, why we rejoice at the ending in that country of all dogmatic teaching, at the expulsion of monks and nuns and all the brood of darkness from their dens, at the driving forth of the Sisters from the hospitals; why we shall rejoice when the idol temples are closed, the fetish images and monstrances and all the paraphernalia of Sacramentalism are confiscated, and the mouths of priests and bishops effectually gagged. Our war cry is not wanting; Lloyd George proclaimed it to the House of Commons and to the listening world when he uttered the great words: "Clericalism is the Enemy!"

Let every man choose, once and for all, on which side he will fight; and let him remember that unless he fight on our side, he will have pronounced that the system called Protestantism is the deadliest and most abominable delusion that has ever fallen, for its sins, upon the world.

ARTHUR MACHEN.

[The above article and the four previous articles in the same series which have appeared in THE ACADEMY can be obtained in book form, under the title "Dr. Stiggins: his Views and Principles," by Arthur Machen. The book is published by Francis Griffiths, 24, Maiden Lane.—ED.]

ATTEMPTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

THE Institute of Oil Painters treats the critic handsomely. It does not seek to mitigate his wrath by a peace offering of "light refreshments" and cigarettes, as other exhibiting bodies are known to do. Scorning the semblance of a bribe under the thin disguise of hospitality, the Institute meets him like a man, takes him seriously, and presents him with an interleaved catalogue and a pencil. And he, poor man, hungrily listening to the quite audible strains which enliven the lunchers in the adjoining restaurant, moodily gazes at the walls, and fretting with his inch of pencil-stump, wonders what on earth he is expected to write in the hundred and odd fair white pages accorded him. To make a *catalogue raisonné* of the whole collection would be wearisome for the writer and monotonous for the reader, who would assuredly find one little word of three letters recurring continually. The space thus kindly put at the critic's disposal is more than the occasion demands. If he were a personal friend of every member of the Council he would hardly want to write a book about the exhibition, and it may be believed that half a sheet of notepaper or the back of an envelope would amply suffice for all the notes the most conscientious journalist might desire to make. As a matter of fact very few critics want to make notes, which are only useful as reminders of things we should otherwise forget; and if a picture fails to impress itself on the memory, either the picture is inconsiderable or the critic is incompetent, and whichever be the case, a note on the subject is little likely to add to the glory of art. How much more subtle is the policy of the New English Art Club, which tactfully keeps back from the critic the instruments of his shameful calling, and, relying on his grateful memory, plies him with "smokes" and almond cake. And this, of course, explains the excellent press notices which the club invariably receives.

This year it so happens that the blank pages of the catalogue are less needed than ever, for, contrary to expectation and experience, the collection of works got together by the Institute includes a number—more than a dozen—which can be recalled without putting any painful strain on the memory. In fact, the exhibition is better and more important than it has been for very many years, and this improvement is largely due to the welcome representation on the walls of the two most

considerable of the honorary members. If the strength of a chain be that of its weakest link, the strength of a picture exhibition is that of its strongest painting. That painting in the present instance is the portrait of "Mrs. Warrack," by the President of the Royal Scottish Academy. Sir James Guthrie's work is so rarely seen south of Edinburgh that one would gladly pay a shilling for the privilege of seeing this alone. It is an object lesson of what portrait painting should be; so complete, yet so suggestive, entirely satisfying, yet giving play to the spectator's imagination; and notwithstanding Mr. Steer's noble "Mrs. Hammersley" and Mr. Sargent's penetrating "Lady Sassoon," it settles at once, for all who have eyes to see, what is the "portrait of the year" and who is the greatest portrait painter in these isles. Dignity and repose, the two great qualities so often lacking—for all its brilliance—in Mr. Sargent's work, are the salient characteristics of Guthrie's portraits. His painting, too, while it has the ease and suavity of a Sargent, has the solidity of a Steer, and, in a master's sense, it is more "finished" than either, for "all trace of the means used to bring about the end has disappeared." It is not so elegant as a Lavery, not so precious as a Whistler, but it has a robustness that neither of these painters can claim, while it vies with their work in the beauty of its refined and harmonious colour. If the slang of the stable be allowed, I would say that Guthrie is bred by Raeburn out of Whistler, for it is his complete assimilation of the excellences of these two great masters which gives Guthrie the unique position he enjoys to-day. There are paintings by Raeburn, there are paintings by Whistler, which Guthrie maybe has not yet equalled, but there are passages in Guthrie's work which neither of these could have achieved, and among them is the right hand and wrist of the "Mrs. Warrack." In a hundred years' time the crowd at Christie's will have grown to recognise that there were great portrait painters at the dawn of the twentieth century, and in those days, when the very names of eminent Academician and pet-painters of society shall have been forgotten, there will be cheering in the sale-room when a Guthrie is placed on the easel. But to-day even the Institute does not seem alive to the value of the treasure in its temporary possession. The Guthrie is not hung as a masterpiece should be, it lies like a ruby cast into a tray of coloured beads. It is not even included among the reproductions in the catalogue, and neither is its neighbour and near rival, Mr. Sargent's landscape, "The Mountains of Moab." It is a brave, glittering picture this, and I make no doubt it is as true to Nature as paint can be. But is truth enough? Has it beauty, beauty of aspect or beauty of handling? It is amazingly clever, but cleverness is not enough, and accomplished exercises do not satisfy the emotions. An ounce of fancy is worth a ton of fact in art, and I find this landscape too scientific for my taste. I would have less of Syria and more of Sargent. It must be wondered at, it demands our respect, but beside the Guthrie it is rather strident.

Excepting these honorary members, whose contributions materially increase the importance of the collection, the honours of the exhibition rest with Mr. F. Cayley Robinson. He stands head and shoulders above the ruck of the exhibitors and demands serious consideration. His primitive imagination and austerity of spacious design is cramped in a picture of cabinet size, and in a better ordered world the State would place wall after wall at the disposal of so great a decorative genius. What we seemingly cannot have on a great scale we must welcome on a small, and till a Pantheon be found for him, we must be content to note Mr. Cayley Robinson's consummate gifts as a decorator in a great little picture like "Youth," in which with conspicuous courage and success he welds together convention and realism, balancing with the

utmost nicety the Rodinesque figure of an awakening man against the decorative lines of trees in a conventionalised landscape. Though Mr. Robinson belongs to the outline-and-flat-tint school of decorators rather than to the more forcible modellers, there is no want of roundness in this beautiful breathing figure, and the arrangement of the whole, the contrasted masses and rhythmical flow of line, give the composition a bigness which mere dimensions cannot dwarf.

Who else does one remember? There is Mr. Sims, a valuable recruit to the Institute, with a pleasant group of nudes—"Storm" and two less coherent compositions. He has ideas, Mr. Sims; he has a true pictorial inventiveness, and he has a sense of colour; but he does not yet sufficiently emphasise his big masses to make them tell at the distance, and his quality of paint is not always agreeable, wearing at times a stale and tired appearance. Still, in the kingdom of the blind he is of royal rank. I remember a sketch portrait of a youth (351) by Mr. Clausen, freshly handled and much more satisfying than his portraits at the Academy; decorative aspects of China and Normandy by Mr. Montague Smyth, two nice little figure compositions by Miss Dorothea Landau, seascapes by Mr. Olsson and Mr. Moffat Lindner, a canal scene by Mr. Aumonier, landscapes by Mr. H. S. Teed, Mr. Hughes Stanton, Mr. Walter Donne—but already we are passing from the realm of achievement into the land of stout endeavour. It is time to put away the pencil. The shouting is over, and what more remains to say had best be whispered into the artist's private ear. Doubtless they all mean well, this hopeless crowd of exhibitors. If they have no higher ambition, they are trying to please the public. They may even succeed, but what is there to write about? "Silence is best."

FRANK RUTTER.

CORRESPONDENCE

A DEFENCE, EVEN OF BAUDELAIRE

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY

SIR.—A poet has to apologise humbly, even in these self-advertising days, if he protests, however mildly, against the critic's scorn. If I were to write to the *Soapmakers' Weekly Journal* affirming that Mr. Pears' beautiful brown soap was made in France, Mr. Pears would make a protest, and I, not he, would apologise. My critic in THE ACADEMY has directly accused me of borrowing my poetical wares for the "Bridge of Fire" from France, from Baudelaire, and from Verlaine; and I should like (without the slightest attempt to value my wares) to declare that they are English made and not noxious in the sense implied, and to attempt to prove the same. And especially I should like to deprecate all reference to "The Yellow Book."

Art is good, or bad; not healthy or unhealthy, French or non-French, "Yellow Book" or non—"Yellow Book." Will that unhappy periodical never be allowed to rest quietly in its grave? It contained some good early work by Mr. Yeats and others, some ephemeral witticisms by Mr. Beerbohm. Its only claim to immortality is founded on the drawings of Aubrey Beardsley; and they can illustrate my point. These drawings thought so sinful and alarming, are just amusing or severe satires that remind us of Leonardo da Vinci's admirable grotesques. But when Aubrey Beardsley drew attenuated people, it was considered a ghastly sign of mental disease. And when he drew dragons and other curious delights, and Japanese patterns, and ridiculous divinities:

Square heads that leer and lust, and lizard shapes that crawl—

If I may quote from my book, everyone accused him of being decadent, or French, or cynical, or *fin de siècle*, while to me a love of pleasantly malformed beasts seems most delicately child-like and humorous. In such a fantastic mood it pleased me to call myself a "sad comedian and most tragic fool." "The despair of Mr. Flecker is rather absurd." Well, better a tragic fool than a dull fool. But can no one recognise any

charm in a half-serious rhetoric? Rhetoric is true to life: we use it in moments of excitement, despondency, or passion, if we say anything at all; we cannot use such language as Othello's for our miseries. Trammel rhetoric in verse, and its exaggeration, I thought, would appeal as at once sincere and humorous. Of such outrageous and great humour in prose "Sartor Resartus" is the example. I wanted humbly to try in verse. In this mood I called Oxford a "county town" and signed for "the empty canal at noon"; in this mood I wrote a luxurious sonnet introducing such joyous words as "portcullis," "cinnabar," "catacombs," and "tourniquet"; in this mood I wrote of

The jealous Lord

Who rolled the hosts of Pharaoh in the sea,
and imagined Bacchus leading the dance on Hampstead Heath:

The 'busmen pranced, the maidens danced,
The men in bowlers gambolled.

And in this mood did I translate Baudelaire's rollicking ode to Satan:

Thou stretchest forth a saving hand to keep
Such men as roam upon the roofs in sleep.

Because I did this, and wrote a poem in a Baudelarian mood while I was translating it, I am said to have acknowledged Baudelaire as my master, and to have chosen to translate the poem "pour épater le bourgeois."

Now, with regard to the last charge, I did not think that any *bourgeois* read new books of poems, and it never occurred to me that among the few dozen readers I can expect to find anyone would be even startled to see an ode to Satan. I judged by my friends, but I suppose they must have been very wicked men, for they did not mind at all. And I did not read that Mr. Shaw was episcopally denounced for making the D—, as I had perhaps better call him, utter words of wisdom in "Man and Superman."

But, to speak seriously, the accusation of having Baudelaire as master, the coupling of his name with that of Verlaine, and the sinister hints of insincerity, immorality, and cynicism, whispered by this accusation, seem to me first of all to imply a false notion of Baudelaire. Baudelaire was not a monstrous decadent, nor did he babble of Pierrots, nor does his poetry resemble Verlaine's in the remotest degree. An essentially classical poet, a master of harmony and form, he was, unlike Verlaine, invariably careful to make his images correspond to his sense. His affinities are with Racine, Milton, and, above all, with Dante. Though his mediæval sense of the taint of sin and his extravagant Christianity may have sometimes led him to be unfortunate in his choice of subject, yet in the choice of language he is infallible, and his poems are the most virile poetic productions of the nineteenth century in France. Call the tearful dirges of Lamartine, the slovenly and bombastic tirades of Hugo, the querulous and fugitive sentiment of Verlaine dangerous to imitate if you will. Baudelaire is beyond imitation, and, as Mr. Gosse has somewhere remarked, only one man, the unhappy Maurice Rollinat, has ever tried. And I no more attempt to imitate Baudelaire because I have translated the "Litany" than Goethe because I have translated "Mignon." If apart from my love of jovial grotesques I have any philosophy, I have let my wandering student tell it to his lady beneath the moon:

Darling, a scholar's fancies sink
So faint beneath your song;
And you are right, why should we think,
We who are young and strong?

We're of the people, you and I,
We do as others do;
Linger and toil and laugh and die,
And love the whole night through.

Perhaps some reader, if any there be, will see why this mention of "Yellow Book" sets me in arms for very horror, so that I could almost quote the epilogue to Asolando.

JAMES FLECKER.

THE POPULARISATION OF POETRY

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY

SIR.—Mr. Richard Middleton wonders "whether the poets are doing their best to make the people hear them."

Well, we live in a noisy age, but Heaven save us from shrieking versifiers!

The poet writes, and it appears to me, in handing his work over to the tender mercies of his publisher, the poet's efforts to make himself heard should cease. If his voice is worth hearing and we do not listen, the onus lies with us—the public (unless we can shift it on to the shoulders of our media—the critics).

But my purpose in writing was to suggest another—even older—means whereby the voice of the poet may be heard.

Is there not in London to-day a small but intelligent audience ready to hear poetry recited for the sake of something besides its dramatic intensity? Are there not a few with ears for rhythmic utterance whose hearts can rise above "scenic effects," and in whose minds the divine gift of an imagination has not been quenched?

Personally, I believe there are, and am acting in this belief.

May I, sir, through the medium of your columns invite such to apply to me for a short pamphlet dealing with such matters, which I shall be happy to send to anyone on request.

MAX PLOWMAN.

October 25.

THE MEMORABLE LADY

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY

SIR,—I have never been able to find out who is the "memorable lady" referred to in Mr. George Meredith's sonnet, "The World's Advance," thus:

"Spiral the memorable lady turns our mind's ascent,"
and should be very grateful if any of your readers could enlighten me.

M. A. C.

MORTAL MEN

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY

SIR,—Your review of "Mortal Men" in this week's issue is admirable, but I wish you would come down more heavily on the women-made books of this kind.

I wonder why women writers nearly always represent their sex as lustful and vicious. The average woman is essentially moral, by inclination as well as by convention.

I hate to suggest the explanation, but is it possible that women writers, being precluded by circumstance or principles from treading the "primrose path," enjoy a vicarious pleasure by describing the adventures of the less virtuous ones.

I wonder.

P. BEAUFROY.

November 4.

MODERN BLANK VERSE

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY

SIR,—I am in search of a work giving a comprehensive and explicit exposition as to what is considered to be the best and soundest *modern* blank verse, both as regards technique, style, and literary substance. Could any kind reader oblige me? I should prefer it in one volume, but more if necessary; it must be modern. State, if possible, author, publisher, and price. You will see I wish to arrive at a thoroughly sound knowledge of what is best in modern blank verse.

"SCOTT."

C/o Mrs. Kirk, 53, Skinnerthorpe Road, Fir Vale, Sheffield.
November 1.

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To the Editor of THE ACADEMY

SIR,—The reviewer of my novel, "A Soul from the Pit," in a recent issue of THE ACADEMY, suggested quite reasonably that I might have handled the difficult theme of modern hetairism with more directness. When I state that Messrs. Boots and Company have refused to admit "A Soul from the Pit" to their shelves, on the plea that it is too frank and explicit, you will understand the difficulty that attends the faithful and artistic presentation of this problem in England.

We are unfortunately cramped beneath serious trade restrictions that harass any author who desires to write honestly, and frequently leave him no choice between not writing at all, or writing with one eye on the libraries and the other upon his ideals and principles as an artist. The result is an emasculated fiction which shirks the great questions of life. At the same time almost any topic may be treated flippantly or cynically without encountering the prejudices of the library censors. The supreme offence is seriousness. My novel is wholesome. Perhaps the moral is too obvious and the purpose too insistent.

I have written a paean of passionate and exalted love, an emotion which is apparently discreditable in the present age, when "sentiment" is usually alluded to as "mawkish" or "morbid."

Messrs. Boots and Company stand alone in their refusal of my book. I am glad to say that it is being circulated by Messrs. Smith and Son, Messrs. Mudie, and the *Times* Book Club. I do not blame the gentleman who occupies the arduous position of censor to Messrs. Boot's Library. He is the victim of a system, and I cannot think that he is under any misapprehension concerning the tendency of my novel.

The dramatic authors who complain that other writers are immune from censorships may be reminded that the library boycott is a grievous hindrance to the conscientious novelist.

WALTER M. GALICHAN.

November 1.

"THANKING YOU IN ANTICIPATION"

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY

SIR,—Professor Skeat strongly objects to the above expression, as no doubt do many other people who would like to preserve something of *old-time* courtesy.

How is it such phrases become common? Is it not that nowadays too much is sacrificed to the rabid time-saving passion? Profuse and effusive demonstration of thanks are out of date and seldom expected, since phrases such as "thanks in advance," "awaiting a favourable reply," "thanking you for —," are become the fashion. Of course, they are all meant to imply the writer's wish to preclude the necessity of further trouble on his side. I presume they originate with commercial people, and although their usage is not generally regarded as anything but polite, it seems a pity that they should ever have come into ordinary every-day use.

F. W. T. L.

November 4.

SUNDAY TRAVELLING

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY

SIR,—I notice two further communications in your current issue in answer to my letter on "Sunday Travelling," which you were good enough to publish. Your first correspondent, "C. O. A." states that "420,000 men are employed every Sunday in taking people about," and then asks: "Is it, as Mr. Algernon Ashton declares, abjectly crazy, for the clergy to object to this?" Yes, I say, most certainly it is; appallingly and incredibly crazy! Besides, what right have the clergy to interfere with Sunday travelling at all? I tell them to mind their own business! The letter of your second correspondent, Mr. O. Mouat Balthasar, is a truly splendid one, as it could not have stated the case in favour of people travelling on Sundays more convincingly, more unanswerably, and more crushingly. I thank him heartily for his communication.

ALGERNON ASHTON.

November 4.

"LORD BACON"

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY

SIR,—It may be worth while to recall the characteristic explanation which Macaulay, in his essay on "Lord Bacon," gave for the persistence of this erroneous title:

"In January, 1621, Bacon had reached the zenith of his fortunes. He had just published the *Novum Organum*, and that extraordinary book had drawn forth the warmest expressions of admiration from the ablest men in Europe. . . . He had been created Baron Verulam. He had subsequently been raised to the higher dignity of Viscount St. Albans. His patent was drawn in the most flattering terms, and the Prince of Wales signed it as a witness. . . . Posterity has felt that the greatest of English philosophers could derive no accession of dignity from any title which James could bestow, and, in defiance of the royal letters patent, has obstinately refused to degrade Francis Bacon into Viscount St. Albans."

A. C.

CRIPPLED CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS HAMPERS

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY

SIR,—May I once again ask the courtesy of your columns to remind your generous readers of the distribution of Christmas hampers to upwards of seven thousand poor crippled children in the metropolis. These welcome gifts are dispatched direct from the Guildhall by the Lord Mayor and

Sheriffs on the morning of the day when, by permission of the Corporation, we entertain some 1,200 Ragged School children in the Guildhall.

His Majesty the King has again given a donation to the Fund, which it is my privilege to bring to the annual notice of the public. The Right Hon. General Sir Dighton Probyn, Keeper of His Majesty's Privy Purse, writes me, October 28:—

Buckingham Palace.

Dear Sir William Treloar,

I have submitted your letter to the King, and obtained his Majesty's permission to inform you that he readily and gladly complied with your request.

You may therefore with all certainty put the King down as a regular annual subscriber of 10 guineas to your most excellent charity.

I cannot conclude without sending you my very hearty congratulations on the great success your noble efforts on behalf of the poor cripples has met with, not only in connection with the "Hamper Fund for Crippled Children," but still more so in your large scheme for erecting a home for these poor unfortunate little creatures.

I am hoping that again this year we shall not only be able to say that we have denied no deserving applicant, but that we may have, as we had last year, a balance in hand to meet those extremely pitiable cases in which a crutch, a cork leg, or the loan of an invalid chair is more welcome even than the hamper.

All through the year the work (by the Ragged School Union) of registration, visitation, and relief continues, or we could not undertake the hamper distribution on such a scale, with the certainty that not one goes astray or falls into undeserving hands. The little cripple entertains the family, and on a modest estimate the Fund brightened the lives last Christmas of over thirty thousand of the poor of London. I am in receipt of hundreds of most gratefully-worded letters.

Donations may be sent, as heretofore, to me, addressed "Little Cripples' Christmas Hamper Fund, 69, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C."

W. P. TRELOAR,
Lord Mayor.

P.S.—This is the fourteenth year of my Fund, and every year I have been increasingly successful.
November 1.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ART

Rea, Hope. *Rubens*. Bell, 1s. net.

BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Childhood. By Millicent and Githa Sowerby. Chatto & Windus, 3s. 6d. net.

The Bed-Time Book. By Helen Hay Whitney. Chatto & Windus, 5s. net.

The Peter Pan Picture Book. By Alice B. Woodward and Daniel O'Connor. Bell, 5s. net.

DRAMA

Garnett, Edward. *The Breaking Point*. Duckworth, 3s. 6d. net.

EDUCATIONAL

Lateinisches Übungsbuch für Obergymnasien. Von Alois Kornitzer. Wien : Tempsky, 3 m.

Les Bannis, par Emile Souvestre. Edited by Eugène Pellissier. Macmillan, 1s.

Elegeia. By C. H. St. L. Russell. Macmillan, 3s. 6d.

Nicomède. Tragédie par Pierre Corneille. Edited by G. H. Clarke. Macmillan, 3s. 6d.

Cours Pratique de Japonais. Par François Guézennec. Fascicule I. Librairie, E. J. Bull, n.p.

Plutons Apologie des Sokrates und Kriton. Wien : Tempsky. *Sedlmayer-Scheindlers Lateinisches Übungsbuch*. Wien : Tempsky.

FICTION

Hill, Headon. *The Hidden Victim*. Ward, Lock, 6s.

Hales, A. G. *A Lindsay o' the Dale*. Fisher Unwin, 6s.

Hodgson, William Hope. *The Boats of the "Glen-Carrig"*. Chapman & Hall, 6s.

George, Herbert. *The Master of Means*. Greening, 6s.

Prague, Joseph. *The Abductors*. Greening, 6s.

Scott, Edward. *A Romance of Three*. Greening, 6s.

Burnett, Frances Hodgson. *The Shuttle*. Heinemann, 6s.

Ramsay-Laye, Elizabeth P. *The Adventures of a Respectable Bohemian*. White, 6s.

Hart, J. Wesley. *In the Iron Time*. Culley, 6s.

Gould, Nat. *The Little Wonder*. Long, 2s.

St. Aubyn, Alan. *Purple Heather*. Long, 6s.

Weyman, Stanley J. *Laid up in Lavender*. Smith, Elder, 6s.

Viereck, George Sylvester. *The House of the Vampire*. Moffat, Yard, n.p.

Godkin, G. S. *Captain Vivanti's Pursuit*. Elliot Stock, 6s.

Burton, J. Bloundelle. *A Woman from the Sea*. Nash, 6s.

Oliphan, P. Laurence. *Julian Reval*. Nash, 6s.

Dawe, Carlton. *The Plotters of Peking*. Nash, 6s.

Lyndon, Roderick. *Another Point of View*. Humphreys, 5s. net.

Farley, Agnes. *Ashdod*. Chapman & Hall, 6s.

Brown, Vincent. *The Fashionable Christians*. Chapman & Hall, 6s.

POETRY

Gundrod, Charles F. *Songs from the Classics*. David Nutt, 5s. net.

A Chaplet of Thoughts. By G. W. Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent, n.p.

Auringer, O. C. *Friendship's Crown of Verse*. New York : Browning, n.p.

A Spirit Message from Robert Burns. Kegan Paul, Trench, 6s. net.

Lindsay, Lady. *Poems of Love and Death*. Kegan Paul, 3s. 6d. net.

Hydromel and Rue. Rendered into English from the German of "Marie Madeleine," by Ferdinand E. Kappey. Griffiths, 5s. net.

The Pilgrim's Staff. Poems Divine and Moral. Selected and arranged by Fitzroy Carrington. Duckworth, 2s. 6d. net.

Woods, Margaret L. *Poems Old and New*. Macmillan, 4s. 6d. net.

Wynne, C. Whitworth. *The Skait of Guillardon*. Kegan Paul, 6s. net.

Viereck, George Sylvester. *Nineveh and other Poems*. Brown Langham, 5s. net.

Atherton, Robert. *Village Life and Feeling*. Greening, 3s. 6d.

Watt, Hansard. *Myths about Monarchs*. Nash, n.p.

Caleb, Arthur Ernest. *The Days of the Floods*. Elliot Stock, 3s. 6d. net.

Frazer, Eppie. *The Clodhopper: A Development in Verse*. Bale & Danielsson, n.p.

REPRINTS AND NEW EDITIONS

The York Library: Waterloo. By George Hooper. *Zadig and other Tales*. By Voltaire. *Lectures and Notes on Shakespeare*. By Samuel Taylor Coleridge. *An Egyptian Princess*. By Georg Ebers. Translated by E. S. Buckheim. Bell, 2s. net.

Lydekker, R. *The Game Animals of India, Burma, Malaya and Tibet*. Being a new and revised edition of *The Great and Small Game of India, Burma and Tibet*. Rowland Ward, 18s. net.

Phillpotts, Eden. *The American Prisoner*. Nelson, 7d. net.

Sesame and Lilies: Ethics of the Dust. By John Ruskin. Allen, 1s. net.

Martineau, James. *Endeavours after the Christian Life*. Allenson, 1s. 6d. net.

Illustrated Cameos of Literature. Edited by George Brandes. Aristotle. By Fritz Mauthner. Translated by Charles D. Gordon. Heinemann, 1s. 6d. net.

The Art and Pleasures of England, Aratra Pentelici. By John Ruskin. Allen, 2s. 6d. net each.

Borrow, George. *Lavengro*. Murray, 2s. 6d. net.

Scott, Sir Walter. *Quentin Durward*. Edited with introduction, notes and glossary by W. Muirson. Cambridge : The University Press, n.p.

Dickens, Charles. *A Christmas Carol*. Chapman & Hall, 2s. 6d. net.

Carey, Rosa Nouchette. *The Household of Peter*. Macmillan, 3s. 6d.

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Mr. R. B. Haldane and "Public Opinion."

The Right Hon. R. B. Haldane, M.P., Secretary for War, has addressed the following letter to the Editor of PUBLIC OPINION:

WAR OFFICE, 1st October, 1907.

Dear Mr. Parker,

I think that in the new form of "Public Opinion" under your editorship, you do well to make prominent what is concrete and living in the shape of the opinions maturely formed of men who are trying to do the work of the nation and of journalists, the standard of whose criticism is high. What interests people is that which is expressed in a concrete form and has in it the touch of humanity. The views of strenuous spirits and the criticisms of really competent critics given in their own words comply with this condition. Your paper will succeed if it can only keep up to this standard, and I think you have brought it on to the right lines.

Yours faithfully,

R. B. HALDANE.

Percy L. Parker, Esq.,
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